

# Dance MFA

## Develop and Refine Formal Oral Presentation Skills

### Goal Description:

MFA in Dance candidates will develop & refine the ability to articulate their choreographic process and philosophical understanding of dance through formal oral presentations.

**Providing Department:** Dance MFA

**Progress:** Ongoing

### RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

#### Applies Formal Oral Presentation Skills in Philosophical Scholarship

##### Learning Objective Description:

Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying formal oral presentation skills and a clarity of understanding within their philosophical scholarship.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

#### Evaluation of Oral Presentation of Philosophical Scholarship

##### Indicator Description:

Required oral presentation of philosophical research will be evaluated on communicative skills, clarity of thought, and a logical approach to the subject matter as shown in the attached rubric. Evaluations take place during required courses.

Attached Files

 [MFA Oral Presentation Rubric](#)

##### Criterion Description:

100% of the students will be evaluated on their proficiency in oral presentation skills with 80% passing with a score of satisfactory.

##### Findings Description:

80% Excellent

20% Satisfactory

We did meet our goal of 100% of the students scoring satisfactory. However, the assessment of oral presentation in coursework was slightly lower than last year's percentages. Last year there were two data points gathered from oral presentations in coursework 1). 83% excellent, 13% satisfactory; 2) 92% excellent, 8% satisfactory.

Additionally, students scored lowest the year in the area of Clarity of Thought. In this assessment area, the instructor looks to see if students demonstrate 1) Critical thinking skills 2) Exploration of concept, 3) Sense of risk taking, 4) Sustained line of inquiry. While not all students who scored low missed the mark on all four categories assessed, the faculty should consider implementing ways to strengthen this area of oral presentation skills in general. Developing ways to address this area through instruction should raise these scores and get us closer or above last year's numbers.

Attached Files

 [Evaluation of Oral Presentation Skills in Required Classes - 2021-2022.xlsx](#)

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

#### Increase Clarity of Thought in Oral Presentations

##### Action Description:

Several courses in the graduate curriculum offer opportunity for students to orally present their research in a more formal way to an audience, ideally in preparation for student success in one of the more important aspects of the MFA thesis portfolio - a Formal Presentation of Thesis Research, which is presented in the student's last semester of graduate study. The faculty would like to focus in the coming year on increasing the student's ability to present with more Clarity of Thought. In this assessment area, the instructor looks to see if students demonstrate 1) Critical thinking skills 2) Exploration of concept, 3) Sense of risk taking, 4) Sustained line of inquiry. Developing ways to address this area through in class instruction will hopefully strengthen this area of oral presentations.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### **Applies Formal Oral Presentation Skills in Research-Based Creative Scholarship**

#### **Learning Objective Description:**

Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying formal oral presentation skills and a clarity of understanding within their research-based creative scholarship.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### **Evaluation of Formal Oral Presentation of Thesis**

#### **Indicator Description:**

A required oral presentation of the written and creative thesis will be given post thesis performance. Oral presentations are evaluated on communicative skills, clarity of thought, and an informed discussion of subject matter as shown in the attached rubric. Evaluations take place during a 30-minute oral presentation upon completion of the written and creative thesis.

Attached Files

 [MFA Oral Presentation Rubric](#)

#### **Criterion Description:**

100% of the students will be evaluated on their proficiency in oral presentation skills with 80% passing with a score of satisfactory.

#### **Findings Description:**

100% scored in the range of excellent

The results show that we met our goal of 100% of the students passing the assessment with 100% passing with a score of Excellent proficiency. This was a strong cohort of thesis candidates and they were all well prepared for their oral presentation of thesis research and performed accordingly.

Last year the faculty set a goal that they would like to see scores in each of the five categories assessed be between 4.5 and 5. This year they thesis candidates scored 4.5 or above in two out of the four categories. Next year we aim to have all four categories fall in the range of 4.5 - 5.0. Continuing to provide opportunities for students to perform oral presentations in coursework seems to help prepare them to be more successful in this capstone experience.

Attached Files

 [Evaluation of Oral Pres of Thesis - 2021-2022.xlsx](#)

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### **Increase Clarity of Thought in Oral Presentations**

#### **Action Description:**

Several courses in the graduate curriculum offer opportunity for students to orally present their research in a more formal way to an audience, ideally in preparation for student success in one of the more important aspects of the MFA thesis portfolio - a Formal Presentation of Thesis Research, which is presented in the student's last semester of graduate study. The faculty would

like to focus in the coming year on increasing the student's ability to present with more Clarity of Thought. In this assessment area, the instructor looks to see if students demonstrate 1) Critical thinking skills 2) Exploration of concept, 3) Sense of risk taking, 4) Sustained line of inquiry. Developing ways to address this area through in class instruction will hopefully strengthen this area of oral presentations.

## Develop and Refine a Formal Writing Voice

### Goal Description:

MFA in Dance candidates will develop & refine a formal writing voice that demonstrates analytic skill.

**Providing Department:** Dance MFA

**Progress:** Ongoing

### RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

##### Applies Formal Writing Skills within Course Work

##### Learning Objective Description:

Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying formal writing skills to the course work that is designed to prepare students for thesis writing.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

##### Evaluation of Required Written Work

##### Indicator Description:

Required written work is evaluated on common standards of writing with a focus on the student's ability to communicate ideas clearly. Four criteria (structure and organization; writing style; MLA format; grammar/usage/mechanics) will be used to measure ability in writing with five possible assessment outcomes (strong, proficient, satisfactory, weak, or unacceptable). Evaluations take place within required history/theory/literature courses.

Attached Files

 [\\*SHSU - MFA in Dance - Required Written Work Rubric.pdf](#)

##### Criterion Description:

100% of the students enrolled in history/theory/literature courses will be evaluated on their proficiency in writing with 80% passing with a score of proficient.

##### Findings Description:

Evaluation of Writing Skills in Required Courses:

Two papers were selected from two different graduate courses for assessment of writing skills in required courses for the 2021-2022 year - a Final paper from Theory in Dance and a Screendance review assignment from Dance and Integrated Technologies.

The findings show that 100% of the students passed both papers with a score of proficient or higher. Additionally, 16 out of 29 papers, 55%, scored in the 17-20/Strong range.

In general, there could be improvement in all four areas assessed. It would be good to see a higher percentage of written work scoring in the 17-20/Strong range. The faculty will consider adding instruction that addresses Structure and Organization and Writing Style more directly to help strengthen these scores.

Attached Files

 [Evaluation of Required Written Work - 2021-2022.xlsx](#)

### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

#### **Focus in on identified weaknesses for graduate level writing**

##### **Action Description:**

The faculty will consider adding instruction inside required classwork that addresses Structure and Organization and Writing Style more directly to help strengthen student writing.

Also to assist thesis candidates with their writing, committee members can push those students to focus on the following areas of writing: Content & Focus, Analysis and Critical Thinking, and Logic and Flow to see if they will be able to match the quality of writing accomplished by the current year of candidates.

### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

#### **Applies Higher Level Research and Writing Skills in Thesis Work**

##### **Learning Objective Description:**

Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying higher level research and writing skills to written elements of thesis portfolios.

### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

#### **Evaluation of Thesis Research and Writing Skills**

##### **Indicator Description:**

As students develop and present an extended creative work, they are required to compose three written documents through their thesis process. Each part of the thesis process has a written component evaluated by a committee. Evaluations for the written component of thesis study takes place within two required courses: Thesis 1 (DANC 6098) and Thesis II (DANC 6099).

**Prospectus:** a proposal situating the student's area of interest within the dance field.

**Literary review:** an 8-10 page paper (approximately 2500-3000 words) providing both summary and synthesis of the breadth of literature existing regarding the student's narrowed line of investigation of a creative research project.

**Reflective paper:** a post-production 6-8 page paper (approximately 2000-2500 words) analyzing and reflecting on the student's creative work. The goal is for the student to sharpen their abilities and summarize their creative agenda in written form.

These documents will be used to evaluate the student's ability to clearly communicate their thesis research through writing. Three criteria (content and focus; analysis and critical thinking; and logic and flow) will be used to measure ability in writing with five possible assessment outcomes (strong, proficient, satisfactory, weak, or unacceptable).

Attached Files

 [\\*SHSU - MFA in Dance - Evaluation of Thesis Writing.pdf](#)

##### **Criterion Description:**

100% of MFA Thesis documents will be assessed by Thesis Committees for each thesis candidate on their proficiency in writing with 80% passing with a score of proficient.

##### **Findings Description:**

Findings Description: Evaluation of Thesis Writing

100% passed with a score of proficient

The results show that we did meet our goal of at least 80% of the students passing with a score of proficient in writing and five out of eleven students scoring in the Strong category - 28-30 points.

Other notable assessments: This year's thesis writer's were a strong group who overall scored well in each of the three areas of advanced writing. Those students moving into thesis who are at the prospectus stage can be pushed to work harder on the areas assessed: Content & Focus, Analysis and Critical Thinking, and especially Logic and Flow so that they may match the previous year's writers when the compose their reviews of literature and reflection papers next year.

Sharing this information with the graduate faculty who work with students in thesis writing could help the thesis committee members mentor students in their writing more effectively.

Attached Files

 [Evaluation of Thesis Writing - 2021-2022.xlsx](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### **Focus in on identified weaknesses for graduate level writing**

#### **Action Description:**

The faculty will consider adding instruction inside required classwork that addresses Structure and Organization and Writing Style more directly to help strengthen student writing.

Also to assist thesis candidates with their writing, committee members can push those students to focus on the following areas of writing: Content & Focus, Analysis and Critical Thinking, and Logic and Flow to see if they will be able to match the quality of writing accomplished by the current year of candidates.

## **Development of Distinctive Choreographic Voice**

### **Goal Description:**

MFA in Dance candidates will develop a distinctive choreographic voice and demonstrate its skillful application in a performative context.

**Providing Department:** Dance MFA

**Progress:** Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### **Applies Advanced Concepts in Composition**

#### **Learning Objective Description:**

Students will demonstrate excellence in applying advanced concepts in composition to the creation of extended choreographic works with a sustained artistic vision.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### **Evaluation of Creative Thesis Presentation**

#### **Indicator Description:**

As the culmination of the creative thesis, students develop and present an extended, original creative work. Members of the thesis committee mentor the process from proposal through performance. The thesis presentation will be assessed on the following points: the choreography is informed by student's research; the choreography stands on its own as a work of art; the creative product is reflective of the student's own distinct choreographic vision.

Attached Files

 [MFA\\_ChoreographicRubric](#)

#### **Criterion Description:**



100% of MFA Thesis projects will be assessed by Thesis Committee to have at least Satisfactory proficiency in choreography with 75% passing with a score of Excellent proficiency.

**Findings Description:**

100% scored in the range of excellent

The results show that we met our goal of 100% of the students passing the assessment with at least Satisfactory proficiency in choreography and 100% passing with a score of Excellent proficiency.

The faculty feel this year's thesis candidates as a whole produced fine, well-investigated choreographic work. These results are a step up from last year's results. In general, The weaker category last year was in Transformation of Ideas (Student designs alternative solutions to the choreographic process as needed, demonstrates the ability to effectively synthesize ideas or solutions into a coherent whole, and in the creative process develops new forms or novel approaches). Coursework specifically addressed this aspect of the choreographic process and there was a significant increase in the scoring of this category for this group of students as compared to last year's thesis candidates.

We believe that the ability to be meet with candidates on a regular basis, hold all showings in person, and visit rehearsals where we could provide immediate feedback to the process all contributed to their success. We plan to take note of what allowed these candidates to succeed so well in their thesis projects and work towards duplicating these efforts with the upcoming cohort, which will be a larger one.

The slightly weaker category this year was in Movement Generation (Student understands all perspectives and effectively uses three or more perspectives to generate material. Student consistently demonstrates a high level of movement invention). We will discuss strategies for mentoring students in the generation of movement for thesis work to hopefully raise the average in this category next year.

Attached Files

 [Evaluation of Thesis Choreography- 2021-2022.xlsx](#)

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

**Push students work on movement generation to increase the quality of choreographic work**

**Action Description:**

The faculty are satisfied with the assessment plan in place to measure and identify areas of weakness of choreographic skills for the MFA candidates. The Graduate faculty will continue to push students to work on movement generation in their work in the classroom which will hopefully better prepare them to create successful choreographic thesis works.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2**

**Evaluation of Required Choreographic Work**

**Indicator Description:**

Required choreographic work is evaluated on common standards of choreographic effectiveness as shown in the attached rubric. These choreographic evaluations take place within the three required MFA choreography courses: DANC 5376, DANC 5378, DANC 5380. Extensive, qualitative, face-to-face feedback is also given.

Attached Files

 [MFA\\_ChoreographicRubric](#)

**Criterion Description:**

100% of the students will be judged to have at least Satisfactory proficiency in choreography with 75% judged to have Excellent proficiency.

**Findings Description:**

90% scored in the range of excellent

10% scored in the range of satisfactory

The results show that we met our goal of 100% of the students passing the assessment with at least Satisfactory proficiency in choreography and 75% passing with a score of Excellent proficiency.

The faculty evaluate choreographic effectiveness by looking at five distinct categories with a score ranging from 1-3 points per category. Last year, we noticed that the students overall scored at least a 2.5 in four of the five areas. We then set a goal to strengthen their choreographic skills to have scores of 3 (highest score) across the board in two or more categories. We did not meet this goal, but students did score over 2.5 in all five categories. For next year we will aim to have students score at least 2.75 in three or more categories.

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**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1**

**Synthesizes and Transforms Ideas and Movement**

**Learning Objective Description:**

During the choreographic process, the student will demonstrate an ability to connect, synthesize and transform ideas and movement through the use of appropriate and increasingly sophisticated movement approaches. The student further demonstrates an ability to plan and problem solve during the choreographic process and provides thoughtful responses, in choreographic terms, to critique.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2**

**Evaluation of Creative Thesis Presentation**

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We believe that the ability to be meet with candidates on a regular basis, hold all showings in person, and visit rehearsals where we could provide immediate feedback to the process all contributed to their success. We plan to take note of what allowed these candidates to succeed so well in their thesis projects and work towards duplicating these efforts with the upcoming cohort, which will be a larger one.

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## Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

### Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

#### Closing Summary

The faculty plan to implement the following to increase outcomes in the areas of writing, choreography and oral presentations for graduate students:

1. Continue evaluating graduate level writing with the new assessment methods and focus on the areas of weakness identified in this year's study.
  1. Required written work: Writing Style
  2. Thesis writing: Logic and Flow
2. Mentor student's during coursework on presenting oral presentations with more *ease and flow* and with more *clarity of thought*. The faculty can brainstorm on ways to implement this skill building in the classroom during our Fall faculty retreat.
3. Continue with assessment plan of choreographic skills (particularly since this year called for the students to adapt or invent alternatives to many of their creative projects due to Covid) and continue to focus in on the findings discovered each year. This year's findings indicate that we should focus on strengthening student's ability to transform Ideas and synthesize ideas into a coherent whole. Again, a brainstorming session amongst the faculty on ways to do this should be implemented.

We are hoping that more stability in faculty, perhaps with a search for one or two tenure-track lines taking place in the coming year, would help us stabilize our mentorship efforts of the graduate student body in all of these areas.

### Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

Fewer tenure track faculty members (3 instead of 6/7) and a higher number of graduate students made assessment of the areas listed above challenging as there were only a few faculty members who were familiar with the assessment process. We did manage to gather the data points necessary to create a plan of action. Two tenure track faculty were hired who will also serve as graduate faculty. We believe that at least one more hire would bring us back to pre-pandemic status quo and greatly help us mentor and assess graduate performance.

## New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

### Closing Summary:

The faculty plan to implement the following to increase outcomes in the areas of writing, choreography and oral presentations for graduate students:

1. Although graduate level writing showed improvement, continue evaluating graduate level writing with the recently updated assessment methods and focus on the areas of weakness identified in this year's study.
  1. Required written work: Writing Style and Structure and Organization
  2. Thesis writing: Content & Focus, Analysis and Critical Thinking, and Logic and Flow
2. Mentor students during coursework on presenting oral presentations with an emphasis on improving their ability to present presentations with more *clarity of thought*. The faculty can brainstorm on ways to implement this skill building in the classroom during our Fall faculty retreat.
3. Continue with assessment plan of choreographic skills and encourage faculty to continue to push students to work on movement generation in their creative choreographic work in the classroom which will prepare them to create choreographic thesis works with stronger generation of movement skills.

We are hoping that with the hiring of two new tenure track faculty, bringing us from three to five strong, mentorship efforts of the graduate student body in all these areas will stabilize. The hiring of another tenure track faculty member, bringing us to six tenure track for the unit, and as indicated as needed for a BFA and MFA of our size in the graduate program review (and the graduate numbers were smaller then), would strengthen our ability to effectively mentor the graduate students in all areas.